Claims:

1. An isolated nucleic acid comprising the sequence depicted in Figure 1, SEQ ID NO:1.

2. A nucleic acid as defined in claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is DNA.

3. A nucleic acid as defined in claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is RNA.

4. A recombinant DNA vector comprising a sequence as defined in claim 1.

5. A recombinant DNA vector comprising a sequence as defined in claim 1 operably linked to a transcription regulatory element.

6. A cell comprising a DNA vector as defined in claim 5, wherein said cell is selected from the group consisting of bacterial, fungal, plant, insect, and mammalian cells.

7. A method for producing a polypeptide, said method comprising incubating a cell as defined in claim 6 under conditions that permit expression of one or more polypeptides encoded by said nucleic acid.

8. A method as defined in claim 7, further comprising:

(a) harvesting said incubated cells to produce a cell fraction and a medium fraction; and

(b) recovering said one or more polypeptides from said cell fraction, said medium fraction, or both.

9. A purified isolated nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence depicted in Figure 1 SEQ ID NO:2.

10. A nucleic acid as defined in claim 9, wherein said nucleic acid is DNA.

11. A nucleic acid as defined in claim 9, wherein said nucleic acid is RNA.

12. A recombinant DNA vector comprising a sequence as defined in claim 9.

13. A recombinant DNA vector comprising a sequence as defined in claim 9 operably linked to a transcription regulatory element.

14. A cell comprising a DNA vector as defined in claim 13, wherein said cell is selected from the group consisting of bacterial, fungal, plant, insect, and mammalian cells.

15. A method for producing a polypeptide, said method comprising incubating a cell as defined in claim 14 under conditions that permit expression of one or more polypeptides encoded by said nucleic acid.

16. A method as defined in claim 15, further comprising:

(a) harvesting said incubated cells to produce a cell fraction and a medium fraction; and

(b) recovering said one or more polypeptides from said cell fraction, said medium fraction, or both.

17. A purified polypeptide comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of the sequence depicted in Figure 1 SEQ ID NO:2 and function-conservative variants thereof.

18. A purified polypeptide comprising amino acids 1-45 of the sequence depicted in Figure 1 SEQ ID NO:2.

19. A method for identifying hERβ-interactive compounds, said method comprising:

(a) contacting purified hERβ with a labelled ligand in the presence of test compounds, to form test reactions, and in the absence of test compounds, to form control reactions;

(b) incubating said test and control reactions under appropriate conditions to achieve equilibrium binding of said labelled ligand to hERβ;

(c) determining the level of binding of said labelled ligand to hERβ in said test and control cultures; and

(d) identifying as a hERβ-interactive compound any compound that reduces the binding of said labelled ligand to hERβ.

20. A method as defined in claim 19, wherein said ligand is 17-β estradiol.

21. A method as defined in claim 19, wherein said hERβ-interactive compound is an agonist.

22. A method as defined in claim 19, wherein said hERβ-interactive compound is an antagonist.

23. An antibody that specifically recognizes hERβ.